



**2018/0256M(NLE)**

14.11.2018

## **OPINION**

of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

for the Committee on International Trade

on the draft Council decision on the conclusion of the agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters between the European Union and the Kingdom of Morocco on the amendment of Protocols 1 and 4 to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Kingdom of Morocco, of the other part  
(2018/0256M(NLE))

Rapporteur for opinion: Michel Dantin

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## SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development calls on the Committee on International Trade, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Emphasises that the preferential treatment granted for certain Moroccan fruit and vegetable exports to the EU under the agreement of 8 March 2012 concerning reciprocal liberalisation measures on agricultural products, processed agricultural products, fish and fishery products is a particularly sensitive matter for Europe's horticulture industry;
2. Emphasises, furthermore, that in its opinion adopted on 13 July 2011 as part of the consent procedure in Parliament relating to the agreement, the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development recommended that consent should not be given;
3. Notes that most of the concerns expressed in the opinion voted in 2011 are, from the point of view of the European horticulture industry, still relevant today, in what is a difficult and volatile period for the industry, as a result of, among other things, the ongoing Russian embargo and the continued use of European agriculture as a bargaining chip in international trade negotiations;
4. Emphasises that access to the EU's internal market by all third countries should comply with EU sanitary, phytosanitary, traceability and environmental rules and standards;
5. Emphasises that there are still major competitiveness issues and risks of market distortions for European producers owing to the wide divergences compared with Moroccan producers in terms of overall production costs, working conditions, and sanitary, phytosanitary and environmental standards;
6. Asks the Commission to promote equivalency of measures and controls between Morocco and the European Union in the area of sanitary, phytosanitary, traceability and environmental standards as well as labelling of origin rules, in order to guarantee fair competition between the two markets;
7. Recalls that the updated agreement does not alter the tariff rate quotas and the preferential import regime previously established, and only provides European producers with clarification on the geographical scope of the agreement;
8. Regrets the fact that the provisions adopted in Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 (single CMO) with a view to overcoming problems encountered in the correct application of the entry prices of fruit and vegetable imports from Morocco are becoming ineffective for the higher categories, the so-called 'baby' varieties, which have much higher marketing prices but are attributed a standard product value upon entry to the EU, as is the case with cherry tomatoes; calls on the Commission to put an end to this anomaly;
9. Draws attention to the fact that some of the fruit and vegetables exported preferentially to the EU under the terms of the agreement in question (including tomatoes and melons) come from the territory of Western Sahara, and points out that ambitious plans have been drawn up with a view to further developing such production and exports;

10. Regrets the legal uncertainty that has arisen since the Court of Justice judgment of 21 December 2016; is concerned that the Commission has been unable to provide reliable and detailed data on preferential imports of products from Western Sahara that may have been carried out since that date, in spite of the judgment in question; wonders what the cost has been to the EU budget of any preferences granted during the period concerned without a valid legal basis; in the absence of sufficient comparative information, is doubtful whether the Commission is able to assess the impact of the proposed new agreement properly and therefore calls for swift implementation of the exchange of information provided for in the exchange of letters;
11. Takes note, nevertheless, of the clarification that the new agreement provides, and hopes that it will be able henceforth to provide a clear, stable framework between the parties of this agreement and for the economic operators concerned on both sides of the Mediterranean;
12. Is doubtful whether the distinction drawn in the new agreement between products from the Sahara and those from Morocco is relevant from a customs and trade perspective, setting the obvious political aspects aside; notes, in particular, that in the new agreement there is no allocation of the tariff rate quotas laid down in the initial agreement, and that, in terms of access to the preferences granted by the EU, it will therefore not make any difference whatsoever whether or not products are of Sahrawi origin;
13. Notes that the monitoring of sensitive agricultural products and the strict application of quotas are fundamental to the balanced functioning of the agreement; points out that Article 7 of Protocol 1 to the 2012 Agreement contains a safeguard clause making it possible for appropriate steps to be taken where imports of large quantities of agricultural products classed as sensitive under the agreement cause serious market distortion and/or serious harm to the industry concerned; hopes that preferential imports into the EU of sensitive agricultural products from Morocco and Western Sahara will be subject to appropriate and broad monitoring by the Commission, and that the Commission will still be ready to activate immediately the aforementioned clause where an established need arises;
14. Points out that the EU and Morocco have negotiated, as set out in the initial agreement concluded in 2012, an ambitious and comprehensive agreement on protecting the geographical indications and designations of origin of agricultural products, processed agricultural products, fish and fishery products that provides for the protection by Morocco of the full list of the EU's geographical indications; points out, furthermore, that the procedure for concluding the agreement, which began in 2015, was suspended following the Court's judgment of 21 December 2016; calls for that procedure to be resumed immediately and finalised as soon as possible in conjunction with the conclusion of the agreement considered in this opinion;
15. Calls on the Commission to meet with Parliament's Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development as soon as possible to give a presentation on the current state of play of agricultural trade between the EU and Morocco, including an assessment of the impact of the agreement on European producers, and particularly on farmers' incomes, and a presentation on the forthcoming conclusion of the agreement on geographical indications.



## PROCEDURE – COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<b>Title</b>	Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters between the European Union and the Kingdom of Morocco on the amendment of Protocols 1 and 4 to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Kingdom of Morocco, of the other part
<b>References</b>	2018/0256M(NLE)
<b>Committee responsible</b>	INTA
<b>Opinion by</b> Date announced in plenary	AGRI 13.9.2018
<b>Rapporteur</b> Date appointed	Michel Dantin 30.8.2018
<b>Date adopted</b>	12.11.2018
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 23 –: 8 0: 2
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	John Stuart Agnew, Clara Eugenia Aguilera García, Eric Andrieu, José Bové, Daniel Buda, Matt Carthy, Jacques Colombier, Michel Dantin, Paolo De Castro, Albert Deß, Diane Dodds, Norbert Erdős, Luke Ming Flanagan, Karine Gloanec Maurin, Martin Häusling, Peter Jahr, Jarosław Kalinowski, Zbigniew Kuźmiuk, Norbert Lins, Philippe Loiseau, Giulia Moi, Ulrike Müller, Maria Noichl, Marijana Petir, Maria Lidia Senra Rodríguez, Czesław Adam Siekierski, Tibor Szanyi, Maria Gabriela Zoană, Marco Zullo
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Franc Bogovič, Angélique Delahaye, Anthea McIntyre, Momchil Nekov, Hilde Vautmans, Miguel Viegas, Thomas Waitz

## FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

23	+
ALDE	Ulrike Müller, Hilde Vautmans
ECR	Zbigniew Kuźmiuk, Anthea McIntyre
EFDD	John Stuart Agnew, Marco Zullo
ENF	Jacques Colombier, Philippe Loiseau
NI	Diane Dodds
PPE	Franc Bogovič, Daniel Buda, Michel Dantin, Angélique Delahaye, Albert Deß, Norbert Erdős, Peter Jahr, Norbert Lins, Marijana Petir, Czesław Adam Siekierski
S&D	Clara Eugenia Aguilera García, Paolo De Castro, Karine Gloanec Maurin, Maria Gabriela Zoană

8	-
GUE/NGL	Matt Carthy, Luke Ming Flanagan, Maria Lidia Senra Rodríguez, Miguel Viegas
S&D	Maria Noichl
VERTS/ALE	José Bové, Martin Häusling, Thomas Waitz

2	0
EFDD	Giulia Moi
S&D	Eric Andrieu

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention